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Canberrans young at heart: ABS

Canberra has one of the youngest populations when compared nationally, endured more days over 30 degrees Celsius than on average for the ACT, and has a higher proportion of students finishing Year 12 than any other state or territory, says the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in today's release of **ACT in Focus 2006**. Highlights include:

Region

The Australian Capital Region (ACR) covers an area of 58,588 sq. km, with an estimated resident population of 539,300 people as at June 2005. More than two-thirds (69%) of these people live in the Canberra-Queanbeyan Statistical District. In 2004, the total fertility rate for the ACR was 1.70 births per woman, just under the national rate of 1.77 births per woman. The highest fertility rates within the ACR were in Young (2.41 births per woman), Tumut Shire (2.22) and Eurobodalla (2.05).

Tourism

Total attendance for Floriade last year was over 356,000 people, an increase of 5% on Floriade 2004. In the year ending December 2005 in the ACT, total takings from hotels, motels, guest houses and serviced apartments was \$152m, an increase of 8% on total takings in 2004.

Physical environment

During 2005, the ACT had 648.6 mm of rainfall, the wettest month being September (100.6 mm). On 48 days in 2005, the temperature reached 30 degrees Celsius or higher - 18 days over the average. Total water consumption decreased from 52,262 ML in 2003-04 to 51,719ML in 2004-05, while the number of water users increased by 2,127 to 134,020 over the same period.

People

As at June 2005, the median age of the ACT population was 34.5 years, 2.1 years younger than national figures. The ACT had the second youngest population of all states and territories, behind the Northern Territory (30.9 years).

Welfare and community services

The total number of child care places in the ACT decreased in the year to March 2006 by almost 440 to 14,435 while the total number of clients receiving Home and Community Care services increased by 1,079 in 2004-05. In the same year about half (49%) of these clients were aged 70-84 years and about two-thirds (67%) were female.

Education

The ACT continues to have the highest proportion of students continuing on to Year 12. In 2005, the retention rate of full-time ACT students from Year 7 to Year 12 was 88%, compared with 75% nationally.

Information technology

In 2004-05, 79% of households in the ACT had access to home computers, and 67% had home

internet access.

Further information is in on **ACT in Focus 2006** (cat. no. 1307.8).

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